

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SCCT-01 SAM-01 OPR-02

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O R 260958Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7851

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15556

DELIVER TO DRAPER, NEA/ARN AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: 0900 LEBANON REPORT

1. WAS NOT RPT NOT A MERRY CHRISTMAS IN BEIRUT. THE NERVOUSNESS REPORTED IN OUR REGULAR SITREP OF DEC 24 CONTINUED THROUGHOUT CHRISTMAS EVE AND IS STILL PREVALENT. WHILE SHOOTINGS, KIDNAPPINGS AND OUT-RIGHT MURDER WAS SOEMWHAT DIMINISHED THROUGHOUT DEC 25, IT WAS NEVERTHELESS THERE AND THE STREETS THROUGHOUT THE CITY WERE DESERTED. THE ONLY AREA WHERE THERE WERE SOME TRAFFIC JAMS WAS ASHRAFIYEH BUT THESE JAMS WERE ATTRIBUTED PRINCIPALLY TO PHALANGE ROADBLOCKS AND/OR REROUTING TRAFFIC. AT ONE POINT I HAPPENED TO CROSS CAMILLE CHAMOUN. HE WAS IN HIS LIMOUSINE FOLLOWED BY TWO CARS OF TOUGHS PLUS A TRUCK LOADED WITH GOONS BRANDISHING SOVIET TOMMY GUNS. THERE WERE NO RPT NO FSI IN EVIDENCE.

2. ZAHLE AND THE NORTH CONTINUE TO BE TENSE, BUT ZAHLE AREA REPORTEDLY IMPROVING.

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BEIRUT ITSELF, HAS MORE ARMED MEN IN THE STREET THAN I HAVE

SEEN DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS. THE PHALANGE IN AIN EL-RUMANNEH AND ASHRAFIYEH MAKE NO RPT NO PRETENSE OF CONCEALING THEIR WEAPONS AND THERE ARE A WHOLE SERIES OF CHECKPOINTS.

3. THE ARMY PRESENCE IN THE HOTEL AREA HAS BEEN GREATLY REDUCED AND ALONG THE PORT WHERE THERE WERE A SERIES OF ARMY STRONG POINTS THEY ARE EMPTY PHALANGE HAS MOVED INTO SOME BUT GENERALLY SPEAKING IT IS NO-MAN'S-LAND. SOVIET AMB HAD TEMERITY TO FLY HIS FLAG NOT ONLY ON HIS LIMOUSINE BUT ALSO ON HIS FOLLOW-UP CAR. LATTER TOOK A FEW ROUNDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND ONE OF THE OCCUPANTS WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED.

4. MY VISIT WITH PRES FRANGIE WENT OFF WELL BUT I DIDN'T PRESS HIM ON RECENT EVENTS. HE COULD NOT, HOWEVER, BEEN MORE CORDIAL AND DEEPLY APPRECIATED THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. UNLIKE THE MESSAGES TO KARAME, THE MESSAGE TO FRANGIE HAS NOT, AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, BEEN PUBLICIZED.
GODLEY

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NNN

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